

Amendments to the Specification:

Replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 9 through page 10, line 2 with the following:

AI
Once the sign language symbols corresponding to the words in the speech signal are identified, the resulting signal contains animation model parameters which are used by an animation rendering block 18 to manipulate or animate or otherwise impart movement to the features of a character or icon or symbol stored in memory in the monitor 40 to display the resulting sign language animation video signal on the monitor display screen 20a. In particular, it is presently preferred that the Body Definition Parameters (BDP) and/or Body Animation Parameters (BAP) defined in a Synthetic Natural Hybrid Coding (SNHB) scheme of an MPEG-4 system be used to perform the sign language mapping, as will be known by those have ordinary skill in the art. The animation rendering unit 18 will then access a pre-stored model of a character icon to animate the icon on the display screen 20a to produce an animation of the icon executing sign language gestures corresponding to the words identified in the speech signal. It should be appreciated that in addition to the generated animation sign language signal, the A/V signal will be rendered via block 22, in a known manner to reproduce the video component on the monitor display screen 20a and the sound component on one or more speakers 20b (block 20 in Fig. 1).